

BOOTROOMNEWS

NOPSA NEWS SHEET FOR OFFSHORE WORKERS

MARCH 2009

Be alert to skin changes

At least one in every two Australians will develop skin cancer during their lifetime. We have the highest rate of skin cancer in the world.

The Cancer Council of Australia advises that if you notice anything unusual on your skin to see your doctor as soon as possible. Skin cancer can grow quickly. Do not rely on workplace skin cancer checks alone to detect it.

The Council advises all adults to check their skin regularly themselves. Look for a spot or mole that has changed in size, shape colour; a sore that doesn't heal or a new spot or a spot that is different from the ones around it.

Spending long periods of time working outdoors, year after year, can put you at a high risk of skin cancer. All skin types can be damaged by exposure to UV radiation.

Remember, although your employer has a legal responsibility to provide a safe working environment and this includes sun protection measures for those working outdoors, as an employee, you also have a legal responsibility to cooperate with your workplace's sun protection program.

Many people are not aware that heat or high temperatures are not related to levels of UV radiation. Temperature relates to the amount of infrared present in sunlight, not UV radiation.

Tiredness is a safety hazard

Are you often tired at work? Did you know that the greater the fatigue the poorer the performance and the higher the risk of injury? Fatigue at work is primarily caused by insufficient sleep, prolonged wakefulness and working at times when you would normally be asleep. These factors can be linked to inadequately managed shiftwork.

The short-term consequences of poorly managed shiftwork may be more fatigue-related errors, which could contribute to serious incidents on offshore facilities.

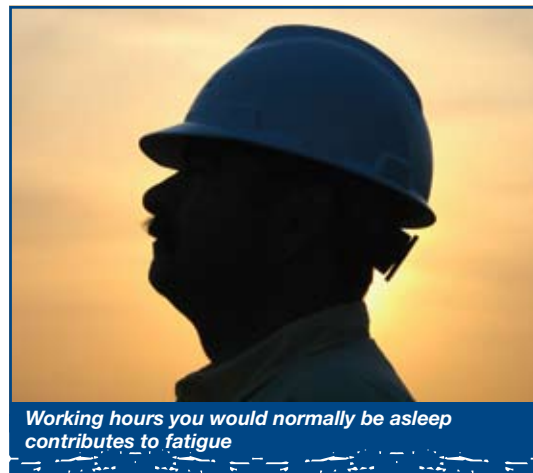
The long term effects of shiftwork may also increase the risk of sleep-related health disorders such as depression, heart disease, gastrointestinal disorders and diabetes, which can seriously affect the welfare of affected workers and their families.

Protection under OHS laws

Occupational health and safety laws¹ covering people working in Australia's offshore petroleum industry require that members of the workforce must not be required to work for a continuous period or successive continuous periods that could reasonably be expected to have an adverse affect on the health and safety of the member or the workforce or other persons at or near a facility.

“...systems for monitoring quality sleep, hours of wakefulness and time of work should be developed and effectively implemented on each facility that engages in shiftwork practices.”

The operator of an offshore facility has a duty to monitor the health and safety of all members of the workforce and to keep records of such monitoring. This means that systems for monitoring hours



worked in shift patterns should be developed and effectively implemented on each facility that engages in shiftwork practices.

Industry workshops planned for 2009

NOPSA will be highlighting the themes of effective fatigue management and regulatory compliance through 2009. A series of industry workshops are planned for Perth and Melbourne. Further information will be available from www.nopsa.gov.au or NOPSA's CEO newsletter produced monthly.



Get fit, get more energy

Poor health and lifestyle choices can contribute to fatigue. Many offshore workers have an unhealthy lifestyle which can lead to depression, lack of concentration, fatigue and low morale.

One titleholder together with the operator of a drilling rig has piloted an awareness program for workers, which looks at issues including diet, weight management and fitness. Initial reports indicate the course is proving popular as people learn more about how to make lifestyle changes that will give them more energy and help with their safety and wellbeing.

Asbestos targeted

Where offshore facilities are known to have asbestos in place, NOPSA will carry out an inspection within 2-6 weeks of the facility arriving in Australian waters.

The use of all asbestos material is prohibited except for certain permitted circumstances. One of these is the use of asbestos in products that are already fixed or installed in a way that does not pose a risk to users unless the asbestos is disturbed.

If the operator of the facility is not complying with its commitments in its safety management system regarding asbestos, NOPSA may take enforcement action.

¹ Petroleum (Submerged Lands)(Occupational Health and Safety) Regulations 1993 - Regulation 4A.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR 'SAFETY CULTURE'?

Investigations into a range of major disasters in high hazard industries worldwide have identified poor safety culture as a common factor.

Safety culture is usually understood as the ideas and beliefs that all members of an organisation share about risk, accidents and ill health. Put more simply, it can be described as 'the way we do things round here'.

The term 'safety culture' is believed to have arisen out of the report into the 1986 Chernobyl disaster when despite the use of engineering and technical safeguards, people failed to do what they were supposed to do.

After many years of improving accident rates through better safety engineering and

individual employee performance, safety culture is now recognized as a vital factor in efforts to improving safety further.

A great deal of research is now undertaken to look at the development of good safety cultures that positively influence human behaviour at work to reduce errors and violations.

Some of the factors which may determine whether a company has a good safety culture include:

- Visible commitment to safety by management
- Workforce participation and ownership of safety problems and solutions
- Trust between shop floor and management
- Good communications
- A competent workforce



National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority

NOPSA'S ROLE

To work with the industry, workforce and other authorities to ensure all health and safety risks in the offshore petroleum industry are properly controlled, and to reduce the likelihood and consequences of major accident events.

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HAVE YOU READ NOPSA'S 'MESSAGE FROM THE CEO' NEWSLETTER?

This monthly newsletter keeps you up to date with NOPSA's regulatory activities, industry happenings and much more! Send your details to information@nopsa.gov.au to receive future copies.



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